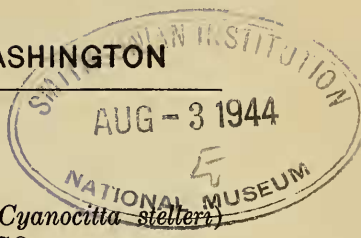


PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON



NOTES ON THE STELLER JAYS (*Cyanocitta stelleri*)
OF SOUTHERN MEXICO.

BY JOHN W. ALDRICH.

The Steller jays of southern Mexico seem to need some revision, both with regard to the application of names already proposed, and also the naming of undescribed races. A recent study of the specimens in the U. S. National Museum, including those in the extensive Nelson-Goldman Mexican collection, of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, showed at once the existence of considerable geographical variation on the southern portion of the Mexican tableland.

There is a fairly consistently black-headed population in the vicinity of Mexico City (Mount Popocatepetle; Tetela del Volcan, Morelos; Volcan Toluca; Mt. Ixtaccihuatl; Ajusco; and Tochimilco, Puebla); a blue-headed race occurs in the mountains to the south (Sierra Madre del Sur, of Guerrero and Oaxaca), and as far north as Orizaba. North of Orizaba in Vera Cruz (Mirador and Cofre de Perote) is an intermediate population represented by specimens of both blue and black-headed individuals, with all sorts of intergrades, but they seem to average definitely nearer the blue-headed race.

The type of *coronata* is not in existence, but the original description by Swainson (Philos. Mag., (n.s.)1, 1827:437) indicates a blue-crested bird taken by Bullock on the table-land of Mexico. This seems to place it somewhere in the mountainous regions south or southeast of Mexico City, very likely along the route taken by William Bullock while making the round-trip between Vera Cruz and Mexico City, described in his "Six Months Travels in Mexico". Dr. W. B. Davis, in his manuscript on a collection of birds from eastern Mexico, has described the geographic variation of these jays in the states of Vera Cruz and Mexico. He has chosen Cofre de Perote, Vera Cruz, as the restricted type locality of *coronata*, a course in which I believe he is justified.

Specimens from Chiapas are lighter and more uniform bluish than the series from Cofre de Perote and Mount Orizaba taken as typical of *coronata*, and are referred to *ridgwayi* Miller and Griscom. Specimens from Michoacan are deeper colored, more purplish on breast, back, and

crest than "*azteca*" from the high mountains in the vicinity of Mexico City, and very much darker and more purplish than *coronata*. They seem to represent a recognizable race which may be called:

Cyanocitta stelleri purpurea, new subspecies.

MICHOACAN STELLAR JAY

Type.—No. 185115, U. S. National Museum (Biological Surveys collection); Patamban, Michoacan, Mexico; January 30, 1903; E. W. Nelson and E. A. Goldman; original number, 9025.

Subspecific characters.—Similar to *C. s. coronata* of southern and eastern Mexico, but darker and richer (more purplish) blue, both above and below; throat more blackish. Similar also to *C. s. "azteca"* from the high mountains in the vicinity of Mexico City, but deeper and more purplish blue throughout; crest and throat more bluish, less blackish. Intermediate in size between "*azteca*" and *coronata*.

Measurements.—Adult male (5 specimens from Michoacan): wing, 139.5–150.0 (145.3) mm.; tail, 142.0–149.0 (145.8); exposed culmen, 25.0–27.5 (26.4); tarsus, 42.0–43.5 (42.3); middle toe without claw, 22.0–24.5 (23.3). Adult female (3 specimens from Michoacan): wing, 136.0–144.5 (140.8); tail, 133.0–140.5 (137.5); exposed culmen, 24.5–27.5 (26.0); tarsus, 40.5–42.0 (41.3); middle toe without claw, 23.0–24.0 (23.5).

Range.—As far as known confined to the mountain pine-oak forests of central and western Michoacan (Patzcuaro, Patamban, Nexpa River, and Mt. Tancitaro).

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